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to those that are in need. Under the earth, and even under the water, grow esculent roots. Two species of the alfaroba, commonly called St. John's bread, throughout great part of the year, produce extremely wholesome, and by no means unsavoury food, both meat and drink. See the munificence of God even towards those by whom he is not worshipped! Behold a rude image of the golden age! The Abipones have it in their power to procure all the appurtenances of daily life, with little or no labour, and though unacquainted with money of every kind, are commodiously supplied with all necessaries; for if a long drought have exhausted the rivers, they will find water even in the most desert plains, under the leaves of the caraquatà, or they can suck little apples, which are full of a watery liquor like melons, and grow under the earth, or dig a well in the channel of a dried-up river, and see water sufficient for themselves and their horses spring up from thence. A Spaniard, in the wilds of America, will pine with thirst, either from being ignorant of these things, or impatient of the labour of obtaining them.

As the supports of life are not all found collected together in one place, nor will suffice for a long time, or a great number of hordesmen, the Abipones are obliged to change their residence,

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like an acorn, is applied to the bole of the softer, and whirled quickly round with both hands. By this mutual and quick attrition of both woods, a little dust is rubbed off which at the same moment catches fire and emits smoke; to this the Indians apply straw, cow-dung, dry leaves, &c. for fuel. The soft wood used for this purpose is taken either from the tree ambaÿ, from the shrub caraquatà, or from the cedar; but the harder, which they whirl round with the hand, comes from the tree tataÿi, which affords a saffron-coloured wood, as hard as box, and fit for dying clothes yellow, together with mulberries very like those of our own country.

Whenever they think fit to sleep at noon, or pass the night by the way, they anxiously look out for some place affording an opportunity of water, wood, and pasture. If there arise any suspicion of a hostile ambuscade, they hide themselves in lurking holes, rendered inaccessible by the nature of the place. You would say that they and their families are at home, wherever they go, for they carry about mats to serve for a house, as a snail does its shell. Two poles are fixed into the ground, and to them is tied a mat, twice or thrice folded to exclude the wind and rain. That the ground upon which they lie may not be wetted by a heavy shower, they providently dig a little channel at the side

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411 defenders. The Abipones are commendable not only for their skill in making their weapons, but also for their assiduity, in cleaning and polishing them. The points of their spears always shine like silver. I was often ashamed for the Spaniards, when I saw them furnished with mean, dirty, and incommodious arms, in the presence of the Abipones, who ridiculed their poverty and laziness. Most of them make use of a reed, a rude stake, a knotty club, the bough of a tree, or a twisted piece of wood, with a broken sword or knife tied to the end of it. The richer sort have guns, but generally bad ones, fitter to terrify than to slay the enemy; and moreover, you will find few able to handle them properly. Remember that I am speaking of the Spanish husbandmen who are ordered to fight against the savages; for you never see the regular troops without the cities of Buenos-Ayres and Monte-Video.

Bows as well as spears are made of the neterge. They are equal to a man's stature in length. When unbent, they are like a very straight stick, not being curved like the bows [237] of the Turks and Tartars. The string of the [824] bow is generally made of the entrails of foxes, [283] or of very strong threads supplied by a species of palm. When about to shoot off their arrows, that they may be able to bend the cord forcibly without hurting their hands, they wear a kind